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Editor

Christmas Day

TOMORROW will be the real Christmas. At midnight tonight the joy bells will usher it once more to the world, and the devout ones who listen will fancy they hear far off echoes of that first hymn to the night when on golden axles the morning stars were all attuned to play the accompaniment as the sons of God sang for joy. It is the most momentous anniversary in history, indeed all others shrink to nothingness by comparison, and the more the incidents connected with it are read the more real they seem, for what mortal who ever lived could frame such a story, in its simplicity and overwhelming majesty? More and more the world is accepting it as the intelligence of men increase their achievements more and more confirm it. The electric light has exactly the component parts of that light which was kindled by divine command, when "darkness was upon the face of the deep." It is the same light as was that soft radiance which shone around the manger and filled the night. The wireless when it on its own currents brings in its messages from infinite space, is but as was that message that fell upon the ears of the shepherds, only that wireless had a voice. As one door after another of science is opened and the treasures from each inner room is brought out and examined, the relations between this world and a higher world are made more clear; and should another wireless with a voice fall upon human ears, it would come as an expected message.

Christmas is the most sacred of all anniversaries save one. It is good to greet it with joy-bells. All the splendors of harp and organ and choir should be invoked; the stateliest service possible is the day's due, for with its birth was born to man a hope, the sweetest ever born, and a promise which links mortals with higher intelligences, for it is a promise that when the poor tabernacles that hold our souls for a brief space, shall rust and fall away, then this corruption shall put on incorruption and the final victory shall be now.

Gifts

IT IS the season of gifts which always brings with it a great deal of pleasure, a great deal of money. The pleasure is between those who are dear to each other, the money comes from mistaken ideas of the demands of society. It is very sweet to receive gifts, no matter how simple, from those we love; it is far sweeter to send gifts to those we love. The only real gifts are

those which carry with them a part of the heart of the giver.

The perfunctory gifts that pass as a duty, should be abolished—they give neither to the sender or the recipient any good, for all the fragrance has been leached out of them—if they carry any it is a borrowed perfume.

When a gift is made to carry an obligation with it, that is no gift at all; it is meant to buy the recipient or a portion of him or her, and often the hated obligation rankles long after the gift is forgotten. Gifts to pay debts are just as barren of all good. We still retain within us a vast amount of ancient barbarism. Sheba carried marvelous gifts to Solomon. She had a double purpose. One was to buy favor of him, the other, no matter how disguised, was through the woman's pride in her soul, for its dimes to ducats, that when she superintended the packing of them, she was saying to herself: "We will see if this king whom they laud so much, can show any treasures finer than these."

The gift to an altar is a proper one, for it is a mute witness that every man, after all, leans upon a power which he cannot comprehend, but which he would, with all his soul conciliate.

The wise men laid gold, frankincense and myrrh at the feet of the newly-born Redeemer, a token of a devotion which they could find no words to express. But a gift to an earthly potentate is not a gift, rather it is in another way, an oath of allegiance to him, or a bribe to secure his friendship or his clemency.

When the old farmer sends a Christmas turkey to the President, down deep he wants to get a nation-wide advertisement for all his other turkeys.

There are only two or three kinds of presents that are appropriate. A florist in France produced a new and beautiful rose. When Marshal Niel returned, covered with honors from the Franco-Sardinia Italian war, a great fete was given him in Paris. Empress Eugenie, then in the full splendor of her loveliness was present and graciously received the Marshal. She was wearing one of these roses in her hair, and the Marshal begged to know the name of the flower. The empress with all her grace detached the rose and placed it in the button hole of the Marshal's coat, and as she did so said: "It shall be called Marshal Niel Rose" and since then it has always borne the name. The marshal is dead, the de-throned empress is a lone, joyless woman, but the rose blossoms regularly as though the grace of the gift had given perfected life and fragrance.

When a man folds a treasury note, puts it in a plain envelope and directs it to some poor man or woman who may be anxious to give his loved ones a Christmas dinner, that is a gift which begins to pay compound interest for time and for eternity.

In the ordinary sense the only real gifts are those that go from friends to friends. A gift that carries no love with it, is tasteless, sightless and has no fragrance, no matter how costly it may be there is no soul in it.

A gift that goes with a full heart with it, no matter how simple it may be, carries with it a fragrance sweeter than the altar-perfume of Persian roses, an aroma as delicate as that which lingers on lips moistened on old tokay wine.

A gift is nothing unless the heart of the giver goes out with the gift.

The Story Of A Soul

THE reviewers tell us that one Jean Christophe of Paris has written a story on the above theme; that seven volumes have been published and three more are to come, which the critics say is more fascinating than Robinson Crusoe, more versatile and higher than Les Miserables—one of the most remarkable novels France has ever published. Only here and there is an extract from the book given by the reviewers, and from them no judgment can be given of either the power or the sweetness of the book, and no one seems able to tell much of the author except that he is a musician and has written several books, none of which have attracted attention. One writer says "he has found himself" in this last production. We take it from the outlines given that the book is the story of a life from birth upward; of a man with a great hereditary musical gift, and we all will be anxious to see the completed volumes. But the reviews give another thought. Who can write the story of a soul? This Frenchman begins with the birth of a child, but when did the soul have its birth? He tells of the hereditary musical gift, but when did the gift have its birth and where? In the child's parents the tabernacle was found which fitted this soul for music, but it was not born there. Where was the place of its birth? Was it where all original music is born? Had it a divine before a human birth? And when the over-wearied man laid down life's burdens, and those who stood near said, "he is dead," did the soul, released, return to its first home? To the music and the divine lights and never fading flowers?

Where is the magician who can tell us of that? Where is the wireless that can flash down to us the message with the long-looked-for answer to the question that vexes mortality and has vexed it since our first mother looked upon her slain son and asked the question: "Is this the end?" The only answers thus far vouchsafed were the implied one on that night of which this night will be the anniversary, and on that other day of which Easter is the anniversary. On these two events hang the hopes of mankind and when full faith is given them, they contain all that mankind needs, for they establish the direct connection between this life and the higher one; they magnify omnipotent wisdom, they exalt man to a station which links him with the highest and insures to him the immortality which he covets.

This French author tells a fascinating story of the passage of a soul through this small life of ours; when will the author come who can go back of him and tell us when the soul has its real birth, how the chains of mortality are welded upon it, and the exaltation that follows when the chains are finally broken and the freed soul seeks again its native sphere?

The other day on the far-off northwestern coast a great steamer freighted with gold and with human lives was dashed by a storm on the rock-ribbed coast. There was no mercy in wind or sea, and the ship lay pounding hopelessly upon the rocks. But out from that ship a message was sent, a cry for help. Ships on their voyages caught it and turned and with all speed hurried to the rescue. It was caught on shore and suddenly other ships cast off their lines and hurried out into the storm on the same errand.